

In Memoriam

ILIANA GEORGIEVA VELCHEVA (1964 - 2024)



Prof. Iliana Velcheva was born on May 16th, 1964 in Nikopol (Bulgaria). She completed her Master degree from 1982 to 1986 at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”, Plovdiv (Bulgaria). In 1998 she obtained her PhD, but she started teaching and assisting at the Faculty of Biology ten years earlier in 1988. She became chief assistant professor in 1998 and associate professor in 2005. In 2013 she became a professor and she was head of the Department of Ecology and Environmental Conservation from 2005 to 2023. Prof. Velcheva was also director of the university’s branch “Lyuben Karavelov” in Kurdzhali from 2014 to 2021.

Her scientific interests included general ecology, aquatic toxicology, and environmental monitoring. Prof. Velcheva was an environmentalist, passionate about pollutants and biomarkers in fish and mussels. She was the first researcher in Bulgaria to apply the multi-biomarker approach in environmental toxicology, and she was among the very few to study the processes of bioaccumulation and biomagnification of numerous anthropogenic contaminants in fish and mussels, both in the field and under laboratory conditions. Under her supervision, 7 PhD dissertations (2 more are ongoing) and over 50 Bachelor and Master theses were completed.

In 2009 she created the international scientific journal “Ecologia Balkanica”, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science and she was Editor-In-Chief until 2023. Prof. Velcheva was a co-author of several textbooks and study guides on ecology, water and soil contamination, and ecotoxicology, which have been widely used by students to this day. She has participated in numerous international and national scientific projects and was a supervisor of several national and university scientific projects. Prof. Velcheva was also a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, where she was chair of the Biology section for many years.

Sadly, Prof. Velcheva passed away on June 5th, 2024 after a prolonged illness. She was a beloved and respected lecturer with an unyielding enthusiasm, generously and lovingly sharing her knowledge with students. Tolerant and compassionate, with free will

and ideas, she inspired her colleagues too. Her human presence, professionalism, and rich academic work served as an example to everyone. Under her wise leadership, the branch in Kurdzhali transformed its image and reinforced its academic spirit, and the Department of Ecology and Environmental Conservation in Plovdiv had a rapid growth and great prosperity, for which we are forever grateful.

Research and scientific publications

<https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=ddN6PUEAAAAJ>

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Iliana-Velcheva>

<https://www.scopus.com/authid/detail.uri?authorId=12798795500>

<https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/4451287>

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